

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-12 ADP-00 AID-20 BNDD-05 CIAE-00

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DRAFTED BY EA/ RA: RWMOORE; HISOM

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R 112203 Z APR 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 067512

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: SNAR, OTRA

SUBJECT: NARCOTICS COMMISSIONER ROLPH' S SOUTHEAST ASIA
VISIT

REF: (A) HONG KONG 2833; (B) HONG KONG 2797;
(C) VIENTIANE 2191; (D) HONG KONG 3422

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1. EA INTER- AGENCY WORKING GROUP HAS NOTED WITH INTEREST HONG KONG NARCOTICS COMMISSIONER NORMAN ROLPH' S RECENT VISIT TO GOLDEN TRIANGLE COUNTRIES. WE WELCOME THIS ENCOURAGING SIGN OF HEIGHTENED INTEREST IN NARCOTICS PROBLEM ON PART BRITISH AND HONG KONG AUTHORITIES AND LOOK FORWARD EXCHANGE OF IDEAS ON NARCOTICS CONTROL WITH ROLPH WHEN HE VISITS WASHINGTON LATER THIS YEAR. WE AWAIT ISSUANCE OF HIS REPORT AND URGE CONGEN HONG KONG MEANTIME TO MAINTAIN DIALOGUE WITH HIM WITH A VIEW TO SUSTAINING MOMENTUM OF HIS INTEREST.

2. ALTHOUGH WE ARE PREPARED TO EXPLORE WITH ROLPH ANY OF THE IDEAS HE HAS PUT FORWARD, WE BELIEVE HE SHOULD BE MADE AWARE NOW OF USG DOUBTS REGARDING PRE- EMPTIVE PURCHASE IDEA WHICH HE APPARENTLY PROPOSES TO REVIVE. WORKING GROUP HAS AGAIN DISCUSSED PROS AND CONS. CONSENSUS IS THAT SITUATION HAS NOT CHANGED SUFFICIENTLY TO JUSTIFY SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF CHANGE IN PREVIOUSLY ESTABLISHED USG POLICY TO AVOID PRE- EMPTIVE BUYING SCHEMES IN GOLDEN TRIANGLE. SOME OF THE PROBLEMS RELATED TO RE- EMPTIVE BUYING WHICH STILL APPEAR PERTINENT ARE: A) SUCCESS OF THE POLICY WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO ASSURE WHEN PRODUCING AND REFINING OF OPIUM IS SPREAD OVER LARGE, REMOTE AREA, MUCH OF WHICH REMAINS OUTSIDE THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND SECURITY CONTROL OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENTS INVOLVED; B) IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO ASSURE THAT MONEY WOULD REACH SMALL FARMER; C) EVEN ASSUMING THAT COST ESTIMATE OF STILL IMPRECISELY ESTIMATED CROPS AND INVENTORIES WERE IN REALM OF POSSIBILITY, PRICES WOULD SOAR ONCE WORD STARTED CIRCULATING ABOUT A PRE- EMPTIVE PURCHASE; D) PRE- EMPTIVE PURCHASING LIKELY SIMPLY TO INCREASE INCENTIVE FOR NEW PARTICIPATNS AT EVERY LEVEL OF THE MARKET. IN LIGHT THESE AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS, WORKING GROUP BELIEVES THAT NEW STUDY OF PRE- EMPTIVE PURCHASING WOULD WASTE A LOT OF TIME ONLY TO ARRIVE AT A DEAD END. BEST POLICY TO PURSUE STILL APPEARS BE ONE OF PLACING MAJOR EMPHASIS ON ENFORCEMENT/ INTELLIGENCE EFFORTS, SUPPLEMENTED BY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CROP SUBSTITUTION SCHEMES ON PILOT BASIS IN CONTROLLED AREAS.

3. ONE OF ROLPH' S SUGGESTIONS WHICH WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE IMPLEMENTED IS ASSIGNMENT OF HKG NARCOTICS SPECIALIST
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TO BRITISH EMBASSY BANGKOK. WE WOULD WELCOME SIMILAR

ASSIGNMENTS TO OTHER BRITISH MISSIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
AS WELL.

4. WE FIND ATTRACTIVE ROLPH' S PROPOSAL TO INVITE THAI,
BURMESE AND LAOTIAN NARCOTICS OFFICIALS TO VISIT HONG
KONG. CONSULTATION BETWEEN RTG AND HKG OFFICIALS, IN
PARTICULAR, MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO MORE EFFECTIVE ATTACK ON
TRAWLER PROBLEM.

5. WE AGREE BILATERAL STUDY GROUP IDEA IS ATTRACTIVE
OPPORTUNITY TO GAIN INCREASED BRITISH AND HONG KONG
COOPERATION IN NARCOTICS CONTROL EFFORT AND GREATER
PARTICIPATION IN NARCOTICS CONTROL EFFORT THAN HERETOFORE
BY BRITISH MISSIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. OUR ONLY
CAVEATS IN REFLECTING UPON THE PROPOSAL IS THAT THE STUDY
GROUP SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON TOPICS OTHER THAN PRE- EMPTIVE
BUYING AND THAT IT SHOULD BE INFORMAL. FORMAL, PERMANENT
GROUP MIGHT CREATE IN EYES OF OTHER COUNTRIES IMPRESSION
OF UNDESIRABLE ANGLO- SAXON DIRECTION OF NARCOTICS CONTROL
EFFORTS; UNDERMINE INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVE INCENTIVES
FOR SELF- HELP BY COUNTRIES OF REGION, AND USURP ROLE OF
UN COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS, AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR THE
FAR EAST REGION. A VARIANT ON ROLPH' S PROPOSAL WHICH
MIGHT MERIT CONSIDERATION IS A SERIES OF AD HOC STUDY GROU-
PS, EMBRACING US AND UK AND PERHAPS OTHER COUNTRIES OF
REGION ALSO DEPENDING ON TOPIC, TO EXPLORE SPECIFIC

TOPICS, E. G. TRAWLER INTERDICTION.

6. WORKING GROUP INVITES ADDRESSEE POSTS WHO HAVE NOT
ALREADY DONE SO TO COMMENT ON US- UK BILATERAL STUDY GROUP
PROPOSAL. ROGERS

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